

Mr. DUNNING: Tempered by assassination.

Mr. BENNETT: Well, it depends entirely upon who is the "assassinator" and who is the "assassinee". I can readily understand after the hon gentleman's observations the other evening that if he had the "power" he would commit hari-kari. At any rate I do suggest to the minister, in order to avoid any possible misunderstanding as to the reasons behind this legislation, that if this power is taken and the exercise of it deferred deliberately a year he will accomplish the purpose he has in mind, and everybody then will have an opportunity of adjusting himself to the new conditions. I fear very greatly the unfairness and injustice that will be done to many people, if I am correctly informed, if this legislation becomes immediately operative, and I fear much more greatly the difficulties that will attend the collecting of the revenue. I fear the minister will find that in nine cases out of ten either one of two things will happen: An adjustment will have to be made with the original gatherer on basis of the furs taken, and he will get that much less money, or else the furs will be sold under such conditions that no tax will be collected and the government will then have to seize the furs for non-payment of the tax, causing much irritation, much difficulty and many complications. After thinking the matter over in the light of what was said to me the other day in Calgary and Edmonton—and I think representations have been made to the minister—it occurs to me that it would serve an excellent purpose if he could see his way clear not to make this legislation operative until another season. That is my only suggestion at the moment.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): I have had representations made to me to delay the imposition of the tax, but those representations have come very largely from transients.

Mr. BENNETT: From whom?

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): From the transient traders. The transient trader is the biggest difficulty we have to encounter. He is the man who has been going in there and securing fur from the legitimate traders and is responsible for the losses to them. In order to cope with that difficulty we put into effect a regulation insisting on licenses being issued, and we do not any longer issue a license to the transient trader. Some hon. member may say that is all in favour of the big fur companies but it is not. All we ask a man to do is to take out a license and establish himself in some definite locality. We are being bombarded by the very men who wish to

[Mr. Bennett.]

travel by dog team here and there and gather all the furs they can get hold of. In the meantime some legitimate trader who has given credit to the trapper and his family is cheated out of his legitimate return. The greatest difficulty lies in connection with the matter of credit, and I want to say frankly I do not see anything in the argument at all with respect to the destruction of credit by the imposition of this tax. The difficulty has been created by the fact that some people have seen fit to get outfits, go into the territories, make rapid trips through the country visiting Indian camps and trappers, buying furs and getting them as cheaply as they can by reason of paying cash. That was the greatest evil we had to contend with in the Northwest Territories. We have stopped all that. We allow no one to enter the territories as a fur trader unless they have a license. We issue a license to a trader no matter whether his operations be small or large; if he says that he intends to trade at a definite location and establish himself there he gets a license and he can begin business. So that we are not, and I want to make this point very clear, turning these operations over to the big companies, such as the Revillon Brothers and the Hudson's Bay Company. I think they complained just as bitterly when the suggestion was made that we put a stop to the operations of the transient traders in order that we might give that protection to which the trade was entitled. I have no notion, however, of bringing these acts into effect with respect to this year's catch. I think due notice should be given in order that the companies interested and others in the business should adjust themselves to the new conditions.

Mr. BENNETT: That is what I had in mind.

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): On the other hand I wish to make it very clear that the difficulty did not arise in regard to the stopping of credit. The difficulty was that those who gave legitimate credit were cheated out of their returns.

Mr. BENNETT: I think the minister did not follow me correctly. What I had in mind was that if the tax is to be exacted it is probable the price paid for furs will be less than the price theretofore paid, and inasmuch as the price has been fixed and the credit given it follows that with respect to this year's catch, if I may use that word—I think the minister says that is the correct term—

Mr. STEWART (Edmonton): Quite right.